

“A Journey Through Texas” from The Journey of Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca
by Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca

“Boulders Taller Than the Great Tower of Seville” by García López de Cárdenas

Grammar and Style: Past and Past Perfect Verb Tenses

Verb tenses help show in what sequence events unfolded. The **past tense**, often formed by adding *-ed* or *-d* to a verb, shows an action or condition that began and ended at a given time in the past. The **past perfect tense**, formed by using *had* before the past participle of the verb, shows a past action or condition that ended before another past action or condition began.

Past: We reached the Tizón River.

Past Perfect: We reached the Tizón River much closer to its source than where Melchior Díaz and his men *had crossed* it.

A. PRACTICE: *In the following sentences, underline the verbs in the past tense and circle the verbs in the past perfect tense.*

1. The women whom we had sent out returned.
2. At the end of three days Castillo returned to where he had left us.
3. He told how he had found permanent houses and that he had also seen maize.
4. Then we saw something that astonished us very much.
5. When they had marched for twenty days, they came to gorges of the river.

B. Writing Application: *Expand these sentences to show the order in which events unfolded. If the verb in the given clause is in the past tense, add another clause using a verb in the past perfect tense. If the verb in the given clause is in the past perfect tense, add another clause using a verb in the past tense. Write your expanded sentences on the lines provided.*

1. He had walked only twelve paces

2. After the guide had told them of the danger

3. Empty gourds riddled the path

4. They struggled to make their meaning clear

5. The Indians led the explorers over the distant mountains
